

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Committee on Government Reform, I want to offer strong support for H. Res. 695. This resolution expresses the condolences of the House of Representatives to the family and friends of Mattie Stepanek on his passing on June 22. Thirteen-year-old Mattie Stepanek was a writer and a national figure who suffered from a rare form of muscular dystrophy, called dysautonomic mitochondrial myopathy.

Mattie, who lived in nearby Rockville, Maryland, was an incredibly articulate and optimistic spokesman for muscular dystrophy. He was perhaps best known for writing five volumes of poetry. Incredibly, three of his books reached the New York Times best seller list. I will briefly read one here. It is called, "On Being a Champion."

Mattie wrote: "A champion is a winner, a hero, someone who never gives up even when the going gets rough. A champion is a member of a winning team, someone who overcomes challenges even when it requires creative solutions. A champion is an optimist, a hopeful spirit, someone who plays the game even when the game is called life, especially when the game is called life. There can be a champion in each of us, if we live as a winner, if we live as a member of the team, if we live with a hopeful spirit, for life."

Mattie Stepanek passed away just a few weeks before his 14th birthday, which was last Saturday, July 17. His life was a singular credit to the strength of the human spirit. He contributed so much during a life that was so short. He has given faith to those in need and hope to those who have lost direction. He has touched so many lives that he has never met, and I know he has touched mine. Mattie will continue to reach down from heaven and touch so many more.

Tonight, I stand in strong support of this resolution that honors Mattie Stepanek, and I highly commend the gentleman from Maryland for moving ahead with H. Res. 695. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me and offer blessings to Mattie.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I first, again, thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for moving this resolution.

I filed it on behalf of the entire Maryland congressional delegation. Mattie was a resident of our State. Jimmy Carter said that he was the most extraordinary person that he had ever met. Although only 13 years of age when he died, he had the courage that really led all of us. He captured love in the entire Nation when on Oprah's show, Oprah asked, what can I do for you, and he said just pray for me.

As the gentleman from Pennsylvania pointed out, Mattie published five books of poetry, an extraordinary accomplishment for a person his age. Of course, he is best known as a national poster child for muscular dystrophy and along with Jerry Lewis appeared

on national television on behalf of raising money to cure that disease.

He was a national figure, a person who touched all of our lives, any person who met him.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. CARDIN. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

For those of us who met this extraordinary young man, it was really in many ways a life-enriching experience. It is hard to believe that someone as young as Mattie had such a depth of understanding of life. His mother is a wonderful lady who transferred to Mattie her own courage, and he had that in great abundance.

□ 2130

But it was his wisdom far beyond his years that impressed everyone who met with him.

When you listened to Mattie, he spoke as a child; but when you listened to what he said, he spoke as a very wise man.

Mr. Speaker, Mattie Stepanek was someone who enriched the lives of all with whom he came in contact. I had an opportunity to see him every year for a number of years at the softball tournament that the International Association of Firefighters conducted in Prince George's County on behalf of Jerry Lewis' telethon on muscular dystrophy. Mattie would attend and he would speak, and everyone there came to hear Mattie. The rest of us were simply surplus.

I want to thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) for introducing this resolution and thank everyone who has been involved in making sure that this resolution comes to the floor and that we observe the passing of an extraordinary American, an extraordinary young man, an extraordinary child of God.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 695

Whereas Mattie Stepanek was born on July 17, 1990, and was raised in Rockville, Maryland;

Whereas Mattie Stepanek had mitochondrial myopathy, a rare form of muscular dystrophy that affects heart rate, breathing, and digestion;

Whereas in 2002, 2003, and 2004, Mattie Stepanek served as the National Goodwill Ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), appearing with MDA National Chairman Jerry Lewis on the MDA Labor Day Telethon;

Whereas Mattie Stepanek was able to fulfill three of his dreams by publishing a book of poetry, meeting his hero, former President Jimmy Carter, and meeting Oprah Winfrey;

Whereas Mattie Stepanek has written five books of poetry, including *Heartsongs*, *Jour-*

*ney Through Heartsongs*, *Hope Through Heartsongs*, *Celebrate Through Heartsongs*, and *Loving Through Heartsongs*;

Whereas the poetry books written by Mattie Stepanek have sold more than 500,000 copies;

Whereas by the age of 13, Mattie Stepanek reached an 11th grade education level through home schooling; and

Whereas on June 22, 2004, Mattie Stepanek lost his fight with muscular dystrophy at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, District of Columbia: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its condolences to the family and friends of Mattie Stepanek on his passing; and

(2) honors the life of Mattie Stepanek for his braveness, generosity of spirit, and efforts to raise awareness of muscular dystrophy.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

July 20, 2004.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,  
*Speaker, House Of Representatives, Room H-232, The Capitol, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: It has been my great privilege and honor to have represented the citizens of Nebraska's 1st Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives for 13 terms. During that time I have served with an extraordinary number of talented and dedicated representatives from both sides of the aisle, and with similarly dedicated and effective congressional staff, who of course make possible the work of Congress.

As a Member, I have been particularly aided by an especially talented, loyal, unusually long-serving, and hard-working congressional office staff and subcommittee staff of high integrity who epitomize the best qualities of my Nebraska constituents and of those Americans who make our country the finest in the world.

However, there comes a time in many a representative's life when that Member of Congress is ready to focus on other priorities and objectives, and I am at that point in my life. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this letter is to communicate to you and the House, that effective at the end of the day on August 31, 2004, I am resigning my seat as the Representative of the 1st District of Nebraska in the U.S. House of Representatives. I also have written to the Governor of Nebraska to advise him of my decision.

Best wishes,

DOUG BEREUTER,  
*Member of Congress.*

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

July 20, 2004.

Hon. MIKE JOHANNIS,  
*Governor, State of Nebraska, State Capitol, P.O. Box 94848, Lincoln, Nebraska.*

DEAR GOVERNOR JOHANNIS: It has been my great privilege and honor to have represented the citizens of Nebraska's 1st Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives for 13 terms. During that time I

have served with an extraordinary number of talented and dedicated representatives from both sides of the aisle, and with similarly dedicated and effective congressional staff, who of course make possible the work of Congress.

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Best wishes,

DOUG BEREUTER,  
Member of Congress.

#### REMEMBERING AUNITA TRIDORIS HUDSON-EDWARDS

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to read words of reflection about one who believed who just passed away, and read this scripture, "God had the power to work within her and to accomplish abundantly far more than all she could ask or imagine."

Aunita T. Hudson-Edwards was born to Levi Hudson and Elnora Davis Hudson on September 20, 1915 in Carthage, Texas. She was the first of three children, and she just recently passed away. When she married Frank Edwards, she enjoyed parenting four children. Many of you might know Willis Edwards, Brenda Joe Edwards and Edward Earl and Frank. In California she worked as a teacher in Palm Springs Unified School District for 15 years and found herself taking in children who had no one else to claim them. She was active in the community, and as a quiet force demonstrated her trailblazing tendency by founding the Palm Springs Chapter of the NAACP and joining as a founding member of the First Baptist Church. She was a life member of the NAACP.

Mr. Speaker, she was a stateswoman, this woman that we pay tribute as she passes on. She enjoyed coming here to the White House during the Clinton and Bush administrations and tended two Congressional Gold Medal ceremonies, one for Rosa Parks and the recent ceremony for Dorothy Height. She loved going to the NAACP national conventions. She was a great soul we will always remember, and wish that her legacy would produce more like Aunita T. Hudson-Edwards.

MRS. AUNITA TRIDORIS HUDSON-EDWARDS

Words of Reflection about one who believed—

"God had the power to work within (her) and to accomplish abundantly far more than all (she) could ask or imagine . . ." Ephesians 3:20 (NRSV)

Aunita T. Hudson-Edwards was born to Levi Hudson and Elnora Davis Hudson on Sept. 20, 1915 in Carthage, Texas. She was the first of three children. She attended public school in Carthage, Texas and graduated from Bishop College, Marshall, Texas. She taught in the Texas public school system for many years. At an early age she united with Bethlehem Baptist Church of Carthage and remained active until she relocated to California.

She married Frank Edwards and enjoyed parenting four children, Willis, Brenda Jo, Edward Earl, and Frank. In California she worked as a teacher in the Palm Springs Unified School System for 15 years and found herself "taking in" children who had no one to claim them. She was active in the community, and as a quiet force demonstrated her trailblazing tendencies by founding the Palm Springs chapter of the NAACP and joining as a founding member of the First Baptist Church. She was a life member of the NAACP.

As an elder stateswoman she enjoyed accompanying Willis to the White House during the Clinton and Bush Administrations, and attended two Congressional Gold Medal ceremonies (Rosa Parks and Dorothy Height), NAACP national conventions, Congressional Black Caucus weekends, NAACP Image Awards, and numerous awards and community service events.

Aunita T. Hudson-Edwards departed this life July 19, 2004. She is preceded in death by her husband, Frank, her sister, Nelva J. Thomas and brother, Hodges Hudson, both of Kansas City, MO and her son Edward Earl. She leaves to cherish her memory, a son, Willis Edwards of Los Angeles, CA; a daughter, Brenda Joe Pine of Palm Springs, CA; a son Frank Edwards of Northridge, CA; grandchildren: Kisha Dixon, Zachary Clayton, Renita Pine, Natalie Edwards, Antoinette Pine, Charlotte Pine, Derrick Pine, Teresa (Kent) Taylor, Tanya (Kenneth) Molinelli, Karon (Lennard) Lehman, and Sharon Edwards; great-grandchildren: Devian, Fanasha, David, Demaria, Kadisha, Eric, Sierra, Alonzo, Jr., Demitra, Tony, Alonzo, Jason, Jr., Jordan, Deshaun, Delawn, Derrian, Armani, Sherlita, Juan, Viviana, Derrick Jordan, DeMond, Jade, Arika, Eleana, Suamana (Bright), Mattias, Christian, Michelle, Heather, and Thomas; a nephew, Perry C. Daniels of Longview, TX; a niece, Gwendolyn C. Moore of Miami, FL; niece, Jacquetta J. West of Kansas City, MO; brother-in-law, Dr. Jackson Thomas of Kansas City, MO. She also leaves a host of nieces and nephews in addition to the many relatives and friends in California and Texas.

Aunita TriDoris Hudson-Edwards made herself available to be used by God. Because of her, young people were rescued, communities were activated, churches fulfilled their ministries, and her family was blessed.

Thank you, Mother Aunita, for giving us so much—We pledge to honor your legacy of humble service with the establishment of a computer lab for senior citizens at the First Baptist Church of Palm Springs sponsored by the Tavis Smiley Foundation and the Aunita TriDoris Hudson-Edwards Scholarship Fund in your name. Until we meet again!

JULY 21, 2004.

HOME GOING SERVICES FOR WILLIS EDWARDS' MOM

We mourn not because she is lost, for God has taken her home, but because we will miss her. Yet, we are assured that if we are faithful, that parting will be only for a short while. We thank God that Mother Edwards

came our way and loved us. Willis Edwards has asked that you, his extended family and friends know of the Homegoing Services for his Mom—

AUNITA TRIDORIS HUDSON-EDWARDS

Service in Los Angeles, Saturday, July 24, 2004, 11:00 AM, Ward AME Church, 1177 W. 25th Street, Los Angeles, CA.

Rev. Norman D. Copeland, Pastor and Officiant, Bishop Carolyn Tyler-Guidry, Eulogist.

Service in Palm Springs, Tuesday, July 27, 2004, 11:00 AM, First Baptist Church, 588 Las Vegas Road, Palm Springs, CA.

Rev. Rodney S. Croom, Officiant/Pastor.

Services conducted by: Agape Funeral Home—4250 South Central Avenue—Los Angeles, CA.

For those who have inquired, in lieu of flowers you may want to make a contribution to the Aunita Tridoris Hudson-Edwards Scholarship Fund to provide assistance to young people pursuing college and/or graduate degrees.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 2225

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) at 10 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.

#### SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2004, PART IV

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Committee on Ways and Means, the Committee on Science, and the Committee on Resources be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4916) to provide an extension of highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund pending enactment of a law reauthorizing the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alaska?

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I regret that, for a record fifth time, we are again on this floor to extend the highway transit and highway safety programs. Our last extension was 2 months ago, amidst high hopes that we would be able to conclude a conference on the TEA-LU bill that the House passed and the companion bill passed in the other body.

The committee of conference, as we quaintly say in the language of the House, has come to no resolution